

*The following was transcribed from the " History of Alabama and Her People, Volume 3" Albert Burton Moore: Chicago: American Historical Society, 1927, by Woody F. Murphy, February 4, 2006.*

AUGUSTUS MURPHY. A pre-eminent example of a patriotic American and an efficient law enforcer, Augustus Murphy, sheriff of Butler County, stands out before the people of this part of Alabama as a most sincere and conscientious man, who demonstrates that high purpose, cleanliness of living and thoroughness in the discharge of his duty are basic principles of his character. He is a native son of Butler County, having been born at Butler Springs, and reflects credit upon this locality, as well as upon his parents' rearing of him. He was born March 12, 1891, a son of Rufus K. Murphy, and grandson of Augustus Murphy, better known as "Gus," who was born at Pine Flat, Alabama, in 1844, and died there in 1919, having spent his life in the same neighborhood, and devoted himself to farming upon an extensive scale. He married Amanda Watts, a sister of Gov. Thomas H. Watts of Alabama, and she also passed away at Pine Flat.

Rufus K. Murphy, one of the best-known men of Greenville, was born at Pine Flat, in 1865, and there he was reared and became a farmer. About 1906 he moved to Greenville, and served as deputy sheriff of Butler County prior to his election to the office of sheriff of the county, in which he served from January 20, 1919, to January 20, 1923, since which time he has been his son's deputy. Mr. Murphy is a detective, and a man well fitted for the work he has followed for so long a period. The Democratic Party holds his allegiance. He affiliates with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Fraternal connections are with the Woodmen of the World. He married Miss Lillie Willis, who was born near Pine Flat, Alabama, in 1869, and the following children have been born to them: Stiner, who died at Pine Flat in boyhood; Rufus King, who died in infancy; Sheriff Murphy, who was the third in order of birth; Essex B., who resides at Chapman, Alabama, marshal for the W. T. Smith Lumber Company; Ila May, who resides at Chapman and who was married first to Bill Frank Williams, who was killed in action during the World war, and she later married Claud Seals, an employee of the W. T. Smith Lumber Company; Annie, who is unmarried and resides with her parents; Isam, who is an automobile salesman, residing at Chapman; Mazie, who is a professional nurse and resides at Dothan, Alabama; Wilson, who resides at Greenville, an employee of the Golson Cash Grocery; Alma, who is a stenographer for Powell & Hamilton, attorneys-at-law of Greenville, and Florence, who is a stenographer for R. O. Winkler, automobile dealer of Greenville. There were three children who died in early childhood, and one in infancy that was unnamed.

Sheriff Murphy attended the schools of Butler County and those of Greenville, and has acquired a wide knowledge of many subjects through comprehensive reading and by association with educated men. He left school at the age of sixteen years, and until 1912 was engaged in farming in his native county. In that year he came to Greenville and for two years was employed in a cafe, entering then the employ of the W. T. Smith Lumber Company at Chapman, but after eight months returned to the cafe at Greenville for a year. Going then with the Greenville Telephone Exchange, he was lineman operator and did board work until 1918. On May 25, of that year, he was inducted into the United States service, was sent to Greenville, South Carolina, and assigned to the Three Hundred and Twenty-first Infantry, Eighty-first Division. Three weeks later he was ordered to

Camp Mills, Long Island, New York, and sailed overseas with his unit, landing at Liverpool, England, July 12, 1918, and at Cherbourg, France, a week later. He participated in the Saint Die and Meusse-Argonne offensives, and remained in France until May 16, 1919, when he was returned to the United States, and was honorably discharged at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, in May, 1919, as a first class private.

Coming back to Greenville, Alabama, after his honorable discharge, he was his father's deputy from July 1, 1919, to January, 1923, when he took over the duties of the office of sheriff, to which he was elected in November, 1922, for a term of four years. His offices are in the Court House, and he resides at Cedar House. In political faith he is a democrat, and, like his father, has always been active in party matters. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is his religious home. He belongs to Yellow Pine Camp Number 15, W. O.W., of Greenville.

On February 23, 1921, Sheriff Murphy married at Greenville, Miss Ruby Pickens, a daughter of John A. and Lucy (Murphy) Pickens, residents of Greenville, where Mr. Pickens is engaged in carpentering and building. Sheriff and Mrs. Murphy have one child, Augustus, who was born July 23, 1923. His long connection with the sheriff's office makes Sheriff Murphy fully conversant with conditions in his county, and as he is utterly fearless and possessed of the determination to enforce the law no matter who is involved, he is producing some very convincing results, and is giving satisfaction to all law-abiding people of all classes.

Note added by Wilda Murphy: The dates 1844-1919 for Augustus Murphy of Pine Flat are not supported by evidence. The 1900 census of Butler County indicates he was born in Oct 1836, a date supported by censuses of 1850-1880. Alabama death certificate #429, generated from a report in the Greenville Advocate, states that he died 13 Aug 1909 at age 73 (although, if birthdate is correct, he would not have been 73 until Oct 1909).